1   What is claimed is:

2

3   1. A computer program product including program code, when executed on a

4   computer, for tracking the time spent by a user working with the computer for different

5   projects, the program code being arranged to:

6   provide a plurality of virtual desktops which are assignable to different projects

7   and switchable by the user;

8   track the time spent by the user working on the different desktops, thereby

9   tracking the time spent on the projects to which the respective desktops are as-

10 signed.

11

12   2. The computer program product of claim 1, wherein the program code is ar-

13 ranged to track the time spent by the user working on the different project-assigned

14 desktops based on "start" and "stop" events indicative of a commencement or ces-

15 sation of work.

16

17   3. The computer program product of claim 2, wherein a start event is at least

18 one of:

19   switching to the desktop assigned to the respective project;

20   manually operating a control element indicative of a start of work;

21   exhibiting user activity on the computer after a stop; and

22   starting the computer or logging-in.

23

24   4. The computer program product of claim 2, wherein a stop event is at least

25 one of:

26   switching from the current desktop to another desktop;

27   manually operating a control element indicative of a stop of work;

28   failure to exhibit any user activity on the computer for a specified inactivity time;

29   not confirming an invitation to confirm user activity;

30   not operating a dead-man's button for more than an accepted dead time;

31   shutting down the computer or logging-off.

27

1

2   5. The computer program product of claim 2, wherein the program code is ar-
3   ranged to track the time spent by the user working on the different project-assigned
4   desktops by logging, for each project-assigned desktop, the start and stop events,
5   and by finally calculating the total time between start and stop events.

6

7   6. The computer program product of claim 2, wherein the program code is ar-
8   ranged to track the time spent by the user working on the different project-assigned
9   desktops by cumulating, for each project-assigned desktop, the time elapsed be-
10   tween the start and stop events.

11

12   7. The computer program product of claim 1, wherein the program code is ar-
13   ranged to prepare project-time-related output data in predetermined time intervals or
14   on user demand.

15

16   8. The computer program product of claim 1, wherein the program code is ar-
17   ranged such that the virtual desktops present link icons, and is arranged to enable the
18   user to define, as individual desktop settings, the link icons individually for the differ-
19   ent project-assigned desktops, so that, upon switching from one of the desktops to
20   another, different link icons are displayable.

21

22   9. The computer program product of claim 8, wherein the program code is ar-
23   ranged to enable the user to determine further desktop settings, besides the link
24   icons, individually for the virtual desktops, said further settings being at least one of:
25   resources, positions of the link icons, and background pictures, so that, upon switch-
26   ing from one of the desktops to another, different desktop settings are active.

27

28   10. The computer program product of claim 8, wherein the program code is ar-
29   ranged, upon a switch from one virtual desktop to another, to:
30   store the desktop settings of the old desktop;
31   retrieve the desktop settings of the newly selected desktop;

1   use the retrieved desktop settings as current desktop settings for the newly

2   selected desktop.

3

4   11. The computer program product of claim 10, wherein the program code is ar-

5 ranged to be executed in the framework of a Microsoft Windows operating system

6 comprising a desktop manager using a desktop directory and a registry, wherein the

7 desktop settings are located in the desktop directory and in the registry, and wherein

8 the program code is arranged, upon a switch from one virtual desktop to another, to

9 export the desktop settings of the previously active desktop from the desktop direc-

10 tory and the registry, and to import the desktop settings of the newly selected desktop

11 into the desktop directory and the registry.

12

13   12. The computer program product of claim 10, wherein the program code is ar-

14 ranged to be executed in the framework of a Unix, Unix derivate or Linux operating

15 system comprising a desktop manager providing a switchable-virtual-desktop

16 mechanism.

17

18   13. The computer program product of claim 12, wherein the program code is ar-

19 ranged to control the desktop settings via an application programming interface of

20 the desktop manager.

21

22   14. A computer program product for extending a computer's operating system

23 which provides a virtual desktop, the computer program product including program

24 code, when executed, for tracking the time spent by the user working with the com-

25 puter for different projects; the program code being arranged to:

26   extend the operating system's desktop functionality to a multi-desktop function-

27 ality, wherein the desktops are switchable by the user and are assignable to different

28 projects;

29   track the time spent by the user working on the different desktops, thereby

30 tracking the time spent on the projects to which the respective desktops are as-

31 signed.

15. The computer program product of claim 14, wherein the virtual desktops present link icons, and the program code is arranged to enable the user to define, as individual desktop settings, the link icons individually for the different project-assigned desktops, so that, upon switching from one of the desktops to another, different link icons are displayable.

16. The computer program product of claim 15, wherein the program code is arranged to be executed in the framework of a Microsoft Windows operating system comprising a desktop manager using a desktop directory and a registry, wherein the desktop settings are located in the desktop directory and in the registry, and wherein the program code is arranged, upon a switch from one virtual desktop to another, to export the desktop settings of the previously active desktop from the desktop directory and the registry, and to import the desktop settings of the newly selected desktop into the desktop directory and the registry.

17. A computer program product for extending a computer's operating system which provides a plurality of virtual desktops switchable by a user, the computer program product including program code, when executed, for tracking the time spent by the user working with the computer for different projects, wherein desktops are assigned to projects; the program code being arranged to:
track the time spent by the user working on the different desktops, thereby tracking the time spent on the projects to which the respective desktops are assigned.

18. The computer program product of claim 17, wherein the operating system to be extended is a Unix, Unix derivate or Linux operating system comprising a desktop manager providing a switchable-virtual-desktop mechanism.

19. The computer program product of claim 17, wherein the virtual desktops present link icons, and the program code is arranged to enable the user to define, as individual desktop settings, the link icons individually for th different project-assigned

1   desktops, so that, upon switching from one of the desktops to another, different link

2   icons are displayable.

3

4   20. The computer program product of claim 19, wherein the program code is ar-

5   ranged to control the desktop settings via an application program interface of a

6   desktop manager.

7

8   21. A computer arranged to track the time spent by a user working with the

9   computer for different projects, comprising:

10   a desktop manager arranged to provide a plurality of virtual desktops which are

11   assignable to different projects and switchable by the user;

12   a project-time tracker arranged to individually track the time spent by the user

13   working on the different desktops, thereby tracking the time spent on the projects to

14   which the respective desktops are assigned.

15

16   22. A method of tracking the time spent by a user working with a computer for

17   different projects, wherein the computer is arranged to provide a plurality of virtual

18   desktops assigned to different projects; comprising:

19   working, by the user, on a desktop which is assigned to a currently handled

20   project and switching to another of the desktops when another project is handled;

21   tracking, by the computer, the time spent by the user working on the different

22   desktops, thereby tracking the time spent on the projects to which the respective

23   desktops are assigned.

24

25   23. A computer program product including program code, when executed on a

26   computer, for providing a graphical user interface with a plurality of virtual desktops

27   presenting link icons to a user, the program code being arranged to:

28   provide the plurality of virtual desktops in a way that the user can switch from

29   one to another as desired;

30   enable the user to define, as individual desktop settings, the link icons individu-

31   ally for the virtual desktops, so that, upon switching from one of the desktops to an-

32   other, different link icons are displayabl .

1

2   24. The computer program product of claim 23, wherein the program code is ar-

3   ranged to enable the user to determine further desktop settings, besides the link

4   icons, individually for the virtual desktops, said further settings being at least one of:

5   resources, positions of the link icons, and background pictures, so that, upon switch-

6   ing from one of the desktops to another, different desktop settings are active.

7

8   25. The computer program product of claim 23, wherein the program code is ar-

9   ranged, upon a switch from one virtual desktop to another, to:

10   store the desktop settings of the previously active desktop;

11   retrieve the desktop settings of the newly selected desktop;

12   use the retrieved desktop settings as current desktop settings for the newly

13   selected desktop.

14

15   26. The computer program product of claim 25, wherein the program code is ar-

16   ranged to be executed in the framework of a Microsoft Windows operating system

17   comprising a desktop manager using a desktop directory and a registry, wherein the

18   desktop settings are located in the desktop directory and in the registry, and wherein

19   the program code is arranged, upon a switch from one virtual desktop to another, to

20   export the desktop settings of the previously active desktop from the desktop direc-

21   tory and the registry, and to import the desktop settings of the newly selected desktop

22   into the desktop directory and the registry.

23

24   27. The computer program product of claim 25, wherein the program code is ar-

25   ranged to be executed in the framework of a Unix or Unix derivate operating system

26   comprising a desktop manager providing a switchable-virtual-desktop mechanism.

27

28   28. The computer program product of claim 27, wherein the program code is ar-

29   ranged to control the desktop settings via an application programming interface of

30   the desktop manager.

31

1   29. The computer program product of claim 23, wherein the program code is ar-

2   ranged to enable the user to assign the virtual desktops to different projects on which

3   the user works; and

4   to individually track the time spent by the user working on the different desktops,

5   thereby tracking the time spent on the projects to which the individual desktops are

6   assigned.

7

8   30. A computer having a graphical user interface with a plurality of virtual desk-

9   tops, comprising:

10   a desktop manager arranged to provide the plurality of virtual desktops

11   switchable by the user;

12   wherein the virtual desktops present link icons, and wherein the desktop man-

13   ager is arranged to enable the user to define the link icons individually for the virtual

14   desktops, so that, upon switching from one of the desktops to another, different link

15   icons are displayable.

16

17   31. A method of providing a user of a computer with a plurality of virtual desk-

18   tops presenting link icons to the user, said virtual desktops being switchable by the

19   user, comprising:

20   enabling the user to define the link icons individually for the virtual desktops;

21   and,

22   when a switch is made from one desktop to another, displaying different link

23   icons for the different desktops, according to the desktop-individual link-icon defini-

24   tion.